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ABSTRACT

One of a series of units introducing secondary school students to business issues, this packet focuses on the television industry and its social and political influence. A teacher's guide and student materials are provided in two separate sections. Following an overview of objectives and activities, the teacher's guide outlines five daily lessons. Additional materials provided in this section are tips for extending the unit beyond five class periods, answer keys, background readings, student quizzes and handouts, and suggestions for using business people as classroom resources. The student materials section contains four classroom activities which recreate various aspects of the television broadcasting business. Following a reading on the industry, students simulate program network decisions. Analysis of a ratings sheet introduces students to the role of audience appeal in television programming. In a culminating simulation, lasting approximately five class periods, students take the roles of network executives, lobbyists for public interest groups, business people from independent production companies, and advertisers involved in the selection of a new television program. (LP)

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INSIDE TELEVISION

Instructor's Guide

Author: Phyllis Maxey
Business Issues in the Classroom
Constitutional Rights Foundation
Los Angeles, California
Revised, 1983

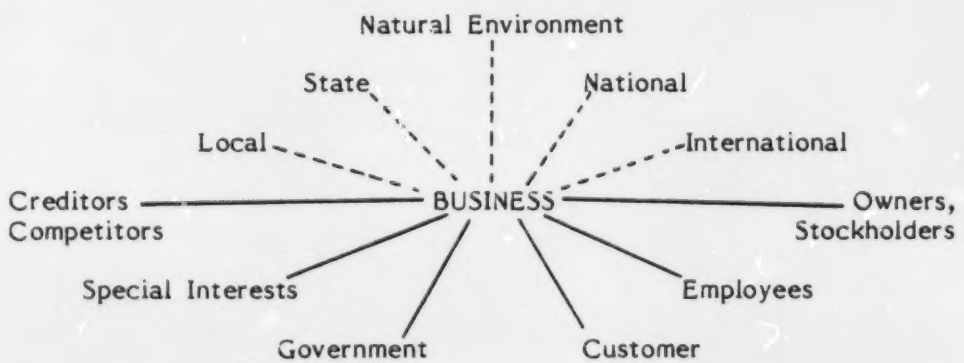
SO 015 378

Instructor's Guide

INSIDE TELEVISION

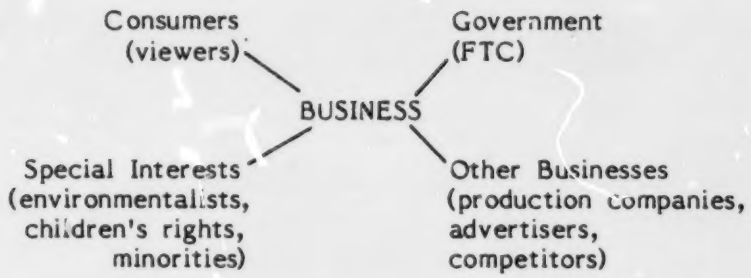
OVERVIEW

Business Issues in the Classroom (BIC) introduces students to exciting, difficult, and complex decisions that face the business community today. Case studies and activities help students understand the setting in which American companies must function. This business environment includes many groups with conflicting interests: stockholders, consumers, employees, special interest groups, business competitors and creditors, and government. These groups affect business and, in turn, are affected by business decisions. Each BIC lesson plan focuses on a specific issue which highlights a particular relationship in the business decision-making environment.



THE BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING ENVIRONMENT

This lesson introduces students to one of the miracles of modern technology, the television industry. Plug it in, turn it on and a screen lights up with dazzling images and spell-binding sounds. Today commercial television reaches more than 75 million Amercian homes with programs that entertain, enlighten and inform. Commercial messages tout the goods and services that we generally associate with an affluent, consumer-oriented society. Those who shape, select, and transmit the sights and sounds of television wield enormous power. How do they decide what will be seen and heard? That's what this unit is about.



THE TELEVISION NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

During five class periods, your students will have an opportunity to simulate a programming decision by a network. A background reading on the television industry gives them the information they will need in the simulation. Analysis of a ratings sheet for the 7:30 p.m. time slot introduces students to the important role of audience appeal in television programming. After this introduction, simulation activities will take 4-5 class periods. Students will be taking roles as network executives, lobbyists for public interest groups, business people from independent production companies and advertising agencies. The level of participation is high as they move toward the selection of a new television program.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. describe the groups important in a television programming decision: networks, production companies, advertisers, audience, public interest groups.
2. explain and demonstrate how these groups interact.
3. exhibit their creativity and imagination as they outline new ideas for commercials and TV programs.
4. communicate and successfully present their ideas to others.

TIME FRAME

5 or more class periods.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Although students will be doing much of the work themselves, your role is crucial in introducing the simulation and background information, and in providing structure and support to the students. Ten small groups will be working both independently and together during the simulation, with the last day devoted to debriefing the activity. Other than a television guide and the materials in this unit, you will not need any additional resources.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Preparation for the simulation: Before introducing this unit to the students:

1. Read the Teacher Background material on p. 10-12 of this Guide, as well as the Student Materials.
2. If desired, arrange for a business resource person with expertise in the television industry to visit the class. See p. 8 of this Guide.
3. Duplicate the student handouts: 4 Fact Sheets and Role Cards for Rounds 1, 2, 3, and 4. All student handouts are in the back of this Guide, p. 14-32.
4. Bring a local TV listing to class.
5. Students should read Student Materials, p. 1-8 for homework.

The instuctor may wish to share the historical information on television broadcasting found on p. 10-12 of this Guide.

DAY 1 INTRODUCTION

After students have finished reading the information on p. 1-8 of the Student Materials (for homework or in class), review the material with them by using the Reading Review questions, p. 9, and/or quiz on p. 13 of Instructor's Guide.

Help students analyze the ratings sheet for a QRS station on p. 7 of the student materials. Ask them what information the ratings sheet provides. Then ask more specific questions such as:

1) Why is the total percentage under the Ratings column only 68% rather than 100%? (Some people were not watching TV)
2) Does this chart show us that there were only seven teenagers watching the QRS network at 7:30? (No, it means 7,000)
3) Of those actually watching TV at this time, what programs attracted the most viewers?
4) What programs are most popular with women? men? children? teens?

Assign students to one of ten teams. Teams can be of about equal size, with public interest groups somewhat smaller in size than the others.

QRS Network Executives
Independent Production Company for Children's Programs
Independent Production Company for Game Shows
Independent Production Company for Informational Shows
Public Interest Group: Environmentalists
Public Interest Group: Minority Groups
Public Interest Group: Children's Advocates
Advertising Agency for Designer Jeans
Advertising Agency for Dishwashing Detergent
Advertising Agency for Gookies Marshmallow Cookies

Students should read activity description on p. 10 for homework.

DAYS 2-5 SIMULATION

Round 1: Team Meetings

Duplicate and distribute Fact Sheets (p. 14-20) to each group and Round 1 Role Cards (p. 21-25). Each round's instructions are on separate role cards. Today students will be working in small groups preparing for the large group meeting tomorrow.

Round 2: Large Group Meeting, Presentations, and Team Meetings

Distribute Round 2 Role Cards (p. 26-27). The QRS exectives should sit in the front of the class. Each of the nine teams will make a presentation to the QRS team while the others listen. Begin with the public interest groups, then the independent production companies and advertising agencies.

After the presentations, students should meet with their teams and complete the tasks outlined on their role cards.

Before the end of class, the QRS executives should announce their selection of the program ideas they liked best and that they would like to see developed further. The teacher may need to work closely with the QRS team so that they complete their selection as quickly as possible. Tomorrow's work depends on which ideas they select.

Round 3: Team Meetings and Lobbying

Distribute the Role Cards for Round 3 (p. 28-30) to each group. During this round, the public interest groups want to meet with independent production companies, advertisers, and QRS executives. The QRS team needs to meet with the public interest groups and advertisers near the end of the class period.

The teacher can use the chalkboard to establish meeting times for groups. After the teams have had five minutes to read their role cards and prepare for this round, ask the public interest groups if they want to meet with the production company for children's shows. Set up times for any meetings that are desired. Write the name of the member from the interest group who will go to the meeting. Do the same for the other production companies and advertising agencies. One member of a public interest group should go to these meetings, rather than the whole team. Thus several meetings can take place simultaneously.

This is the session in which the public interest groups really have the opportunity to influence the type of program or commericial message being developed. Encourage them to go to these groups and lobby on behalf of their causes.

Round 4 Presentation, Vote, Decision, and Debriefing

Distribute Round 4 Role Cards (p. 31-32) to each group. Four program ideas will be presented to the class:

Informational program
Game show
Children's program
QRS-produced program

After all program ideas are presented, allow the QRS management team to meet together to decide which idea they will use. Ask the rest of the class to vote using a secret ballot (so the QRS team can't hear). The class should select which of the programs they would watch personally, and which of the programs they would select if they were network executives.

Have two students tabulate the survey results:

1) Which program of the four presented would you watch?
2) Which program would you select if you were the QRS team?

Ask the advertisers to present their final ideas for commercials and have the class evaluate them in terms of their appeal.

Ask the QRS team to present their decision and the reasons behind it.

Ask the advertisers if they would want to buy time during that show.

Present the results of the students' survey and compare the vote with the decision made by QRS management.

The following debriefing questions will help to review the main points of this simulation.

Simulation Debriefing Questions

1. Which program did QRS network management decide to broadcast? Did the class make the same choice in their secret ballot vote?
2. What audience would be attracted to the program QRS chose? Do you think it will be more successful than the variety show was?
3. Did the public interest groups succeed in influencing the QRS team? The independent producers? the advertising agencies?
4. Are the advertising agencies interested in the program selected by QRS? Why or why not?
5. Each of the teams had information on their Fact Sheets that was not shared with the others. Let's review that information together.
   (a) What steps do the production companies go through when they are trying to get a customer interested in a program?
   (b) Advertising strategies are based on USP and PA. Can someone from one of the advertising groups explain what these abbreviations stand for?

(c) Public interest groups were an important part of our simulation, perhaps more important then their actual role in television. What evidence does the FCC look for when renewing a station's license?

(d) The network management needs sponsors for their programs. What is the income from selling commercials used for?

6. What group was the advertising agency selling dishwashing detergent trying to reach? Was it difficult to develop a commericial? What group were the designer jeans people trying to reach? What group were the Gookies Cookies people trying to reach?
7. Were any of the commercials offensive to you? Were any of the program ideas? Did the commericials or programs use unfair stereotypes or sexist language or images?
8. Now that you have been through this television programming activity, how would you answer these questions: Who decides what programs we see on television? the audience? the advertisers? the networks? the production companies? public interest groups? the FCC? In what ways do each of these groups exert influence?
9. What do you think will happen to the power of the three big networks with the growing influence of cable and pay TV?
10. What can you do if you object to a program or commericial? Why would an advertiser, local station, or network be interested in your opinions?

EXTENDING THE LESSON

There are several subjects that follow naturally from this simulation: (1) Students may be interested in the "curriculum of television." What are we actually learning from this medium? (2) They may wish to learn more about advertising and market research. (3) The role of goverment in the television industry is not limited to granting licenses. There are many rules established by the FCC that influence programming decisions; these could by investigated by students. (4) Another research project might involve contacting local public interest groups to learn what action they have taken to influence television programming. (5) Students may be interested in the technical aspects

of broadcasting -- how does television happen? What are the new developments taking place in this field?

USING A BUSINESS RESOURCE PERSON IN THE CLASSROOM

The Business Issues in the Classroom Program (BIC) has a talented group of business professionals who are prepared to teach one day of this unit. At least two weeks before you want a resource person, call the Constitutional Rights Foundation at (213) 473-5091 and ask the BIC placement coordinator to arrange a classroom visit.

The business resource person could participate in the following ways:

Day 1: After students have completed the reading for homework, the business resource person leads a discussion of the television industry, using the review questions that follow the reading.

Day 5, 6: The business resource person could debrief the simulation, using the questions in this Guide, p. 6-7.

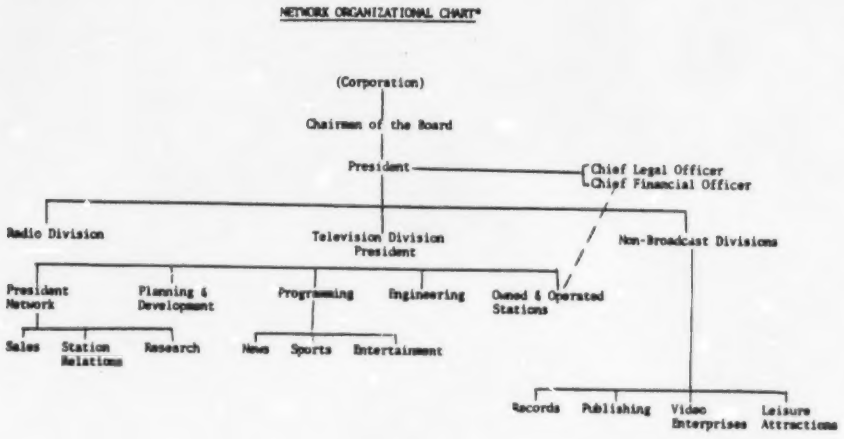
Answers to Reading Review Questions, p. 9

1. Broadcasters need a large audience because that is how they keep the advertisers interested in buying commercial time. The commercials pay for the cost of producing the program. The more expensive the program is to produce, the greater the necessity for a big audience.
2. Television ratings are determined by a company such as A. C. Nielsen or Arbitron. They select a representative sample and determine their viewing habits. They project those findings to the whole population.
3. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) grants licenses. There is a limit on the number of licenses because there are a limited number of broadcast frequencies that can be used before some start interfering with others.
4. Television networks are station groups that broadcast to their own stations as well as their affiliates. They produce some of their own programs and can license other broadcasters to show these programs.
5. Commercial television stations are operated by companies in business to make a profit. Public television is operated by non-profit organizations

with money coming from taxpayers, private and corporate contributors.

6. Market researchers study the viewing audience's needs, wants, tastes, and values. These findings influence the commercials as well as the design and packaging of products.
7. An independent production company develops and produces programs in response to station and network needs.
8. Television viewers influence television by what they watch and what they complain about. Complaints to the FCC or to the station can change programming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



*Patterned after a major network.

Television -- A Historical View

If you had been producing programs during the early days of television, you could have sold them to three types of customers. First there were the networks -- NBC, CBS, and eventually ABC. Through modern technology, each network transmitted its programs live to many stations at the same time.

You also could have sold your programs to the many companies who sponsored entire shows in those days. Examples of such shows were the "Colgate Comedy Hour," the "Texaco Star Theater," and the "Kraft Playhouse," to name just a few. Soap companies generally sponsored daytime dramatic serials which is why they became known as "soap operas."

Finally, you could have sold your programs to the agencies that handled other companies' advertising campaigns. When an advertising agency bought a program, it also made commercials for its customers to be inserted in the show. Sponsors and their advertising agencies paid the networks for facilities and time to telecast their shows throughout the country.

During the mid-1950s, two developments changed the way the industry worked. First there was the rapid growth of the television audience. Since sponsors could now reach many more potential customers, the networks charged more for use of their time and facilities. Then programs began to be filmed before being sent out to the networks. This extra expense drove up the cost of programs even more.

Eventually most sponsors could no longer afford to buy entire programs. Advertising agencies also stopped buying programs when they discovered that commercials were more effective scattered throughout the broadcast schedule. So, for all practical purposes, the networks were left as the sole purchasers of television programs. Although that placed a great burden on the networks, the potential rewards were enormous. The networks could still sell commercial time in and around the programs they made and bought. Now that many programs were being produced on film (and eventually on tape), the networks could show them more than once on their affiliated stations. They could also syndicate them to other stations after their network runs.

Developing Television Commercials

Television commercials were first patterned after radio commercials. An announcer or the star of the show would read the advertiser's copy while holding up or standing next to the product. But by the mid-50s, advertising agencies began filming commercials and animating them. That resulted in snappier, more eye-catching commercials shot in locations more suitable to the products being sold. They could also be shown time after time without fear that someone would flub his or her lines.

The art of making commercials reached its apex in the late 60s when minute-long commercials evolved into elaborate production numbers costing tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars. With spiraling costs, product managers realized that arty commercials did not always boost the sales of their products. They began demanding scientific proof that advertising campaigns really worked. Research also showed that 30-second commercials were two-thirds as effective as minute-long ones. As costs continued to rise, most commercials were scaled down to 30 seconds in length.

Public Interest Groups Complain About Stereotypes

Many public interest groups find fault in the portrayal of their members in television commerical and programs. The Native American International Caucus has complained of a romanticized image of native Americans perpetuated by such commercials as the Mazola Corn Oil ad showing Indians extolling the virtues of "maize." Nosotros, a Latino media group, has criticized the treatment of Latin women. They charge that stars such as Erik Estrada are not portrayed with a Spanish-speaking family or girlfriends. The solutions to these problems vary, but most groups try to make viewers and industry executives more aware of what they are doing. The National Black Media Coalition's executive director, Art Mobley, has urged more blacks to get involved in the production side of television to counteract what he finds to be degrading portrayals. All of the minority groups point to a power structure in the television industry that is dominated by white males. Sumi Haru of the Association of Asian/Pacific Amercian Artists said, "It's hard for someone sitting in an ivory tower to think of people of color if his whole world is white."*

*David Crook, "4 Ethnic Groups Chide TV," Los Angeles Times, Dec. 14, 1980.

QUIZ

Match each of the items in the left hand column with a corresponding item from the right hand column.

_____1. Broadcaster	a. Own stations in five major cities
_____2. ABC, NBC, CBS	b. Designs commercials
_____3. A. C. Nielsen Co.	c. Makes television programs
_____4. Advertising agency	d. Measures television audiences
_____5. Independent production company	e. Transmits programs over the air waves

Circle the letter next to any phrase which correctly completes each numbered sentence.

6. The FCC regulates the broadcast industry to
   a. protect broadcasters from foreign competition.
   b. prevent broadcast signals from interfering with each other.
   c. make sure that the news is reported accurately.
   d. make sure that stations operate in the public interest.
7. ABC, CBS, and NBC
   a. produce programs.
   b. transmit programs simultaneously to hundreds of stations.
   c. own groups of television stations.
   d. are examples of independent production companies.
8. Network programs are transmitted to
   a. independent stations.
   b. affiliated stations.
   c. network-owned stations.
   d. public television stations.

Teacher's Key:

1) e; 2) a; 3) d; 4) b; 5) c; 6) b, d; 7) a, b, c; 8) b, c

QRS NETWORK MANAGEMENT TEAM

Introduction

The people in your group have been selected to play the roles of executives at a fictional network, QRS. You are concerned with replacing a variety show with something that will attract a larger audience during the 7:30 p.m. time slot on Tuesday nights.

Goal

Your goal is to fill that time slot with the most suitable program and sell advertisers the commercial time available to support that show. You have three concerns: the advertisers, the audience, and public interest groups.

Alternatives

You could keep the variety show you are now showing. You could acquire a new program from one of the independent production companies. Or you could develop and produce your own program.

QRS and the Public Interest Groups

As you know, the FCC requires stations to broadcast in the public interest. Therefore broadcasters become involved with various groups representing different causes in order to determine their needs and interests. Programming tries to meet some of their concerns. For example, if one of your dramatic shows has a character experiencing a heart attack, the American Heart Association could assist you in an accurate and helpful portrayal of this illness.

QRS and Independent Producers

There are three companies in this simulation that specialize in different types of programs: information programs, children's shows, and game shows. They present the network with several ideas. If the network likes one of them, the production company develops the idea further -- describing a pilot show and ideas for sequels. The next step is to commission a script. Then the show goes into production. One example of an actual independent production

company is Norman Lear's company, Tandem/T.A.T., which has created such shows as "All in the Family."

QRS and the Advertisers

In order to stay in business you have to sell commerical time at a high enough rate to meet your expenses and pay owners a reasonable return on their investment. According to the Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters, you could sell sixteen 30-second commercial spots during a 30-minute show. Later on you'll meet with classmates representing potential sponsors. In order to sell commerical time to these advertising agency executives, you'll have to convince them that many potential consumers of their products will watch your program.

TELEVISION PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Introduction

Most television shows are produced by independent production companies. These companies employ key people year round to develop new programs and oversee the production and distribution of current shows. The people in your group have been selected to play the roles of prodution company executives responsible for developing and marketing new programs.

Goal

The QRS network may need a new program to air Tuesday nights at 7:30 p.m. Your goal is to develop a program that meets QRS's needs.

What Do Production Companies Do?

Generally you don't produce a program unless you've already got a customer for it. How do you get a customer for a program that doesn't even exist? Gradually, and in steps.

(1) To begin with, you have to know who your potential customers are and what their needs may be.

(2) Once you've identified potential customers and inquired about their program needs, you meet with your staff to "brainstorm" program ideas. That is, you try to think of as many ideas as possible for programs which might satisfy potential customers' needs. Accept all ideas, no matter how strange or crazy. Then narrow down your list to those with the best chance of succeeding.

(3) Eventually you meet with potential customers to "pitch" your ideas to them. If you're lucky, at least one potential customer will commission a script or an elaborate description of a sample program based on one of your ideas. That means that he or she will pay you a certain amount of money to cover script-writing expenses in exchange for the right to buy a sample program from you.

(4) After you have completed the script, you submit it to the customer for review. If you're lucky, the customer will commission a "pilot" from you. In other words, you will be paid a sum of money to produce

a sample program (a pilot) based on the script. In exchange, the customer will get the right to buy a certain number of programs (usually 13 at first) based on the pilot.

Industry experts say that for every 100 ideas pitched, one script is commissioned. For every 100 scripts, one pilot will be produced. For every 100 pilots, one series will result. And for every 100 series, only one will become a smash hit. Whether or not those odds are correct, they give you some idea of the risks involved in producing television programs.

ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Introduction

As you may recall, television commercials and other forms of advertising are devised by people working at advertising agencies on behalf of various corporate accounts. The people in your group have been selected to play agency employees assigned to a specific product account.

Goals

Your group is responsible for coming up with a commercial likely to persuade people to buy the advertiser's product. First, you'll have to determine which segment(s) of the population you're trying to reach. Then you'll have to figure out what message to communicate to the target audience. Next, you'll be asked to design a storyboard which specifies the sights and sounds to be incorporated into the commercial.

What Do Advertisers Do?

Research: Those in charge of marketing and advertising products engage in studies of the consumers of their products. They try to discover the psychological make-up of their customers. Rough versions of commercials are tested on sample audiences, sometimes using computers to monitor brain waves, pupil movements, and other physical responses. They interview prospective customers and ask them to fill out questionnaires. They also conduct surveys to see if commercial spots change buying habits.

The Strategy: Tests prove that most viewers cannot remember commercials that say two or more things about a product. So most advertising strategies are based on a USP (unique selling point) or a PA (product advantage). These devices make the product stand out from the rest of the competition in a favorable light. Sometimes the strategy consists of taking an established product and pointing out that it can do more than most consumers thought.

Commercial Writing: Although television is a visual medium and commercials frequently rely on eye-catching gimmickry for their effects, everything begins

with the word. After outlining the major points to be made in a commercial, a storyboard must be constructed which describes every word, phrase, sound, and image which will be seen and heard. Remember, since commercials cost thousands of dollars per second, every word and camera angle must be planned and executed for maximum effect. For the purposes of this activity, make a rough drawing of your images. Then describe the images and sounds in writing.

PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS

Introduction

You've been assigned the role of a public interest group leader. You're probably wondering what role such groups actually play in the television broadcasting business. It would be misleading to say that they play a central role. They don't. But public interest groups play an important role in representing the interests of children, environmentalists, the handicapped, Hispanics, blacks, and many other groups. They must put pressure on the television industry in order to achieve their goals.

Broadcasting in the Public Interest

Every broadcast station operates with a license from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a government organization that regulates the industry. Since broadcasters use the public airwaves to transmit their programs, they must agree to "serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity." Licensees (station owners) are expected to have a sense of public responsibility.

Broadcast licenses must be reviewed every three years. At renewal time the FCC tries to determine whether the broadcaster has lived up to his or her obligations and the promise(s) he or she made in obtaining permission to use the public airways. The Commission looks for evidence that the licensee has sought to determine community needs and interests and has tried to meet them through some of its programs. Although it rarely happens, the FCC can revoke a station's license because it has failed to perform in the public interest.

So you see, broadcast companies are obligated to listen to you. In fact, they should seek you out. If you represent a significant community interest or need, they're supposed to provide programs for your benefit.

Marketplace Realities

In spite of everything that's been said, television stations aren't terribly interested in filling heavily watched time slots with public interest shows. Such programs may cost stations as much as more popular entertainment shows, but they're bound to generate less advertising revenue. So while QRS's management team may sincerely want to provide programs to suit your group's needs and interests, their business sense might make them reluctant to do so.

ROUND 1 QRS Management Team

1. Read the Fact Sheet which provides information on the role of network management in this simulation.
2. Using the Rating Review on page 7 of the Student Materials, find out the following information:
   * What show is the QRS station now showing between 7:30-8:00?
   * What other programs are also shown during that time?
   * Which are the most popular? With whom?
   * What could you show that would attract a bigger audience?
3. Prepare for the meeting tomorrow by writing questions that you might want to ask each for the following groups:
   * Advertisers
   * Independent production companies
   * Public Interest groups

ROUND 1 Advertising Agency: Dishwashing Detergent

1. The product that you want to sell is dishwashing detergent. Answer the following questions about your product:
   * Who is most likely to buy your product?
   * What might these people want to know about your product?
   * What do potential customers need to know about your product?
   * What is special about your brand vs. other brands?
2. Read the Fact Sheet which provides information on the role of advertisers in the television industry.
3. Brainstorm ideas for commercials -- serious, funny, animated, live action, musical jingles, etc.
4. Select one of your ideas and write a one-page description of a 30-second commercial spot. Tomorrow you will present this idea to the QRS station management team, explaining the type of audience you want to reach.

ROUND 1 Advertising Agency: Designer Jeans

1. The product that you want to sell is designer jeans. Answer the following questions about your product:
   * Who is most likely to buy your product?
   * What might these people want to know about your product?
   * What do potential customers need to know about your product?
   * What is special about your brand vs. other brands?
2. Read the Fact Sheet which provides information on the role of advertisers in the television industry.
3. Brainstorm ideas for commercials -- serious, funny, animated, live action, musical jingles, etc.
4. Select one of your ideas and write a one-page description of a 30-second commercial spot. Tomorrow you will present this idea to the QRS station management team, explaining the type of audience you want to reach.

ROUND 1 Advertising Agency: Gookies Cookies

1. The product that you want to sell is Gookies Cookies. Answer the following questions about your product:
   * Who is most likely to buy your product?
   * What might these people want to know about your product?
   * What do potential customers need to know about your product?
   * What is special about your brand vs. other brands?
2. Read the Fact Sheet which provides information on the role of advertisers in the television industry.
3. Brainstorm ideas for commercials -- serious, funny, animated, live action, musical jingles, etc.
4. Select one of your ideas and write a one-page description of a 30-second commercial spot. Tomorrow you will present this idea to the QRS station management team, explaining the type of audience you want to reach.

ROUND 1 Public Interest Groups: Environmentalists

1. Your group represents environmental interests. Decide which problems you want to focus on: the chemical industry, nuclear power, wilderness areas, strip mining, protection of wildlife, etc.
2. Read the Fact Sheet to find out how a public interest group can influence the television industry.
3. Look at the Rating Review. Are there any shows now being aired between 7:30-8:00 p.m. that could feature programs with your interests in mind?
4. Brainstorm ideas for programs that would feature the issues with which you are concerned. Do you want serious dramas, informational programs, advertising spots, etc? What is the most effective way to communicate with the public?
5. Prepare some arguments for the type of programming you want and reasons why your concerns are important. These arguments and ideas will be presented to the QRS network management team by your group tomorrow.

ROUND 1 Public Interest Groups: Ethnic/Minority Groups

1. Decide whether you want to represent a specific group — Native American, Hispanic, black, Korean, Jewish, or any other ethnic/minority group -- or generally represent minorities. Women are also a minority group in terms of their social role.
2. Read the Fact Sheet to find our how a public interest group can influence the television industry.
3. Look at the Ratings Review. Are there any shows now being shown between 7:30-8:00 p.m. that feature your minority group(s)?
4. Brainstorm some ideas for programs that would treat minority group members fairly. What do you think are unfair protrayals of your group(s)? Do you want programs to focus on problems or accomplishments?
5. Prepare some arguments for the type of programming you want to present to the QRS management team tomorrow. Assign someone in your group to present program ideas and arguments to QRS.

ROUND 1 Public Interest Groups: Parents for Improved Children's TV

1. Your group wants better television programs and commercials for children. Read the Fact Sheet to determine what role public interest groups play in the television industry.
2. Look at the Rating Review. Which programs now being shown between 7:30-8:00 p.m. are suitable for children?
3. Brainstorm some ideas for programs or specials that you think would be good for children in that time slot. What do you want -- information programs, entertainment, serious dramas, non-violent, high ideals, good models for children?
4. Tomorrow you will present an argument to the QRS network team in which you spell out the types of programs your group wants. Make an outline of your arguments and decide who will present your point of view.

ROUND 1 Independent Production Company: Informational Programs

1. Your company's specialty is the design and production of informational programs that inform the public about animals, historic events, famous people, travel, and other reality-based subjects. Read the Fact Sheet to find out about the role of independent production companies in working with TV stations.
2. Look at the Ratings Review. Are there any informational programs now being shown between 7:30-8:00 p.m.? What would your competition look like if you were to offer QRS an information-based program at this time of the evening?
3. Brainstorm some ideas for information shows. You might want to use a magazine format like "60 Minutes" in which several topics are covered. What kind of show would be most competitive in this time slot?
4. Pick your best three ideas for information shows. For each idea, prepare an outline describing the show and why you think it would be attractive to an audience. These ideas will be presented to QRS tomorrow.

ROUND 1 Independent Production Company: Game Shows

1. Your company's specialty is the production of game shows. Read the Fact Sheet to find out about the role of independent production companies in working with TV stations.
2. Look at the Ratings Review. Are there many game shows now being shown between 7:30-8:00 p.m.? What would your competition look like if you were to offer a game show to QRS at this time?
3. Brainstorm some ideas for game shows. For each idea, prepare an outline and some degree of skill or knowledge. What new ideas can you come up with?
4. Pick your best three ideas for game shows. For each idea, prepare an outline describing the show and why you think it would be attractive to an audience. These ideas will be presented to QRS tomorrow. Be sure to include information on the suggested hosts, celebrity guests, the kind of contestants, or any other aspect of the show that makes it special.

ROUND 1 Independent Production Company: Children's Programs

1. Your company's specialty is the production of children's programs, including cartoons, puppet shows and serious dramas. Read the Fact Sheet to find out about the role of independent production companies in working with TV stations.
2. Look at the Ratings Review. Are there many children's programs now being shown between 7:30-8:00 p.m.? What would your competition look like if you were to offer a children's program on QRS at this time?
3. Brainstorm some ideas for children's programs that could fit into this time period -- adventure stories, comedies, cartoons, nature programs, sports, children news. What kind of show would be most competitive and fill QRS's needs at this time slot?
4. Pick your best three ideas for children's programs. For each idea, prepare an outline describing the show and why you think it would draw an audience. These ideas will be presented to QRS management tomorrow.

ROUND 2 QRS Management Team

1. Today you will be looking for ideas for a new show at 7:30 p.m., and finding sponsors interested in buying commercial time.
2. Listen to the presentations of the independent production companies, the advertisers, and public interest groups. Ask questions.
3. Meet with your QRS group and decide the following: for each independent production company, select ONE of their best program ideas. Have each company develop that idea further.
4. Announce which program ideas you want the individual production companies to develop further. They will then prepare a one- to two-page description of the program and an outline of subsequent shows if a series is being planned.

ROUND 2 Advertising Agencies

1. Listen to the presentations from the independent production companies and the public interest groups. Take notes on ideas that are in line with your own objectives of trying to get your product sold.
2. Present your idea for a commercial selling your product. Explain the type of audience and the types of programs which your advertising agency is most interested in.
3. Meet with your advertising group after the QRS network management team has announced which program ideas they want developed further. Make a list of these programs and rank them in order of most to least valuable in terms of selling your product.

ROUND 2 Public Interest Groups

1. Listen to the other public interest groups' presentations and the program ideas of the independent production companies and advertisers. Makes notes of acceptable and unacceptable ideas for programs and commercials from your group's point of view.
2. Present your group's ideas for programs and arguments for why your interests should be a number one priority of QRS management.
3. After the presentations are finished, meet with your public interest group to compare notes on any of the group members' objections to the presentations.

ROUND 2 Independent Production Companies

1. Listen to the presentations by other production companies.
2. Present your three ideas for programs to the QRS management team.
3. Listen to the presentations of the advertisers and special interest groups.
4. QRS executives will tell you which idea they prefer, and commission your company to develop a script on that one idea. Tomorrow you will be working on further development of the idea.

ROUND 3 QRS Management Team

1. Today you will be working with your QRS group. Divide the following two tasks among group members.
   a. Attracting advertisers: Based on the program ideas being developed further and the needs of the potential sponsors, prepare a list of arguments showing WHY these sponsors should be interested in buying time during the various shows. Use the Ratings Review to project the kind of audience interested. During the last part of the period one of you should meet with the advertising agencies and "make your pitch." Listen very carefully to their reactions and report back to your group.
   b. Developing a new network-produced program: Your station can produce its own program to replace the one you are now showing. Based on the statements of the public interest groups, develop a program that would satisfy one or several of their interests. Meet with members of relevant interest groups to get a reaction to your program idea. Report back to your group on the reactions of each interest group.
2. Select a member of your group to present the new network-produced program idea to the class tomorrow.

ROUND 3 Advertising Agencies

1. Meet with members of public interest groups to get their reactions to your presentation of a 30-second commercial.
2. Change your commercial if necessary, given the feedback from public interest groups. Try not to offend the audience you want to reach -- that doesn't sell products.
3. Prepare a storyboard: draw a series of rough pictures of what the viewers will see in your commercial. Underneath each picture, write what they will hear.

SAMPLE STORYBOARD for Arm and Hammer Baking Soda:

ROUND 3 Public Interest Groups

1. Meet with advertisers who are developing commercials that would help or hurt your interests. React to the commercials they presented yesterday and make suggestions of ways they could change their commercial to help your cause.
2. Meet with your public interest group and compare notes on the program ideas that QRS selected for further development. Of these, which are helping and which are hurting your cause? Select people from your group to go talk with production companies about your group's concerns.
3. Prepare a written statement that will go in the QRS licensing file as evidence that the network has listened to public interest groups. State your group's concerns with programs and commercials and your recommendations for improvements.

ROUND 3 Independent Production Companies

1. Given the program decision of QRS yesterday, develop that program idea further. If it is going to be a series, how would each episode develop the story? What would be the high point of your program? Why do you think the audience would watch this show?
2. Given the concerns of the public interest groups and advertisers, how could you change your program content? Does your program use unfair stereotypes, offensive language, etc.?
3. By the end of class today, you should have a 2-page description of your pilot program and an outline of subsequent shows. Tomorrow one of your group will read the description to the entire class and they will rate it in terms of its appeal. Choose someone to make tomorrow's presentation.

ROUND 4 QRS Management Team

1. Begin the last round by asking each group to present their program ideas to the class:
   a. Informational program
   b. Game show
   c. Children's program
   d. Network's proposal for new program.
2. Make your final decision about which of the four programs you will use.
3. Announce your decision as to which program you will air. You will then learn which, if any, of the advertising sponsors wants to buy commercial time during your program.

ROUND 4 Advertising Agencies

1. Listen to the presentations of program ideas. Decide which program you would not want to sponsor given the market you want to reach. Keep it secret.
2. While QRS staff is deciding which program to air, present your story board and commercial message to the rest of the class. Explain why you decided to sell your product in that way. Do not announce which programs you would or would not sponsor.
3. When QRS informs the class about which program they have decided to air, announce to the class whether or not you want to sponsor the program, and explain why you have made that decision.

ROUND 4 Public Interest Groups

1. Listen to the presentations of the program ideas. Did your group succeed in influencing program content?
2. Listen to the proposed commercial spots. Did you group influence the advertising agencies?
3. When QRS announces which program they will air between 7:30-8:00 p.m., decide if your public interest group was successful in influencing that decision.

ROUND 4 Independent Production Companies

1. Listen to the presentations of the program ideas.
2. Make your group's presentation.
3. Listen to the ideas for commercials.
4. QRS and the advertisers will then decide if they will use your show.

INSIDE TELEVISION

Student Materials

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Business Issues in the Classroom
Constitutional Rights Foundation
Los Angeles, California
Revised, 1983

INSIDE TELEVISION

Click. You turn the television on. Click...Click...Click. You switch to your favorite show, or whatever happens to please you at the moment. Before you know it, you're totally engrossed in the program. Then a commercial flashes on the screen, breaking the spell before briefly casting one of its own. That's the way it goes -- hour after hour, night after night.

Television exerts a powerful influence over our lives. It makes us laugh. It makes us cry. It creates fads, fashions, heroes, and celebrities. For some, it is their only source of news; for others, their only company. For most of us, however, it's a never ending stream of entertainment and information to divert us from our daily concerns.

If you're like the average person, you probably talk about television with your family and friends. But do you ever wonder who controls this powerful medium? Who decides what programs we'll see? or never see? Do you ever wonder how they make their decisions? What they consider when selecting or rejecting programs? Do you ever wonder whether you count or not? Whether anyone cares what you like or want to see?

During the next few days you're going to participate in classroom activities which recreate various aspects of the television broadcasting business. You'll play the role of someone who influences or affects the production and distribution of television programs and commercials. Although the real world of broadcast television is much more complicated than the one in which you'll be participating, these activities will help you understand it better. You'll probably never look at television the same way again.

This unit includes the following learning activities:

1. READING: Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Commercial Broadcast Television and More
2. REVIEW: Questions to Answer
3. ACTIVITY: Interpreting the Ratings
4. SIMULATION: QRS Programming Decision

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT COMMERCIAL BROADCAST TELEVISION AND MORE

In order to participate effectively in this activity, there are a number of things you should know about commercial broadcast television. First and foremost, it is a business -- a very big business. Every year billions of dollars change hands. Some say that we are the principal products being bought and sold. What do they mean by that?

The Advertising Function

In order to profit financially from transmitting programs, broadcasters have to sell commercial time to advertisers. The price they charge generally depends on the number of people who may be watching when the commercial is aired. Therefore broadcasters try to present programs which will attract the largest possible audience. In effect, they're selling us (actually our viewing impressions) to advertisers who hope we'll be influenced by their commercials.

The Ratings

How do those who buy and sell commercial time know how many people are watching at any given time? They rely upon two companies, A. C. Nielsen and Arbitron, to estimate and report the size of viewing audiences. These companies use the same research techniques that all survey or polling organizations employ. They select a small but representative sample of the population and determine their viewing habits. Then they project those findings to the total population. Those estimates of viewing audience size and composition are known as the "ratings."

The ratings are the main factor that determines the price of television advertising spots. In prime time, from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m., when the viewing audience is the largest, a 30-second spot can cost between $9,000 and $12,000. Advertisers are looking for maximum exposure to potential buyers of their products. An old movie at 1:00 a.m. might cost $50 for a 30-second spot, but there will be very few viewers. You may have noticed that only one brand of car, beer, or soap is advertised during some programs. For a "special" such as the NFL pre-season games, companies will compete among themselves for

exclusive rights during these football games. Such competition also drives the cost of advertising higher.

Broadcasting

Viewing audiences can be huge because of the special nature of broadcasting. Program sights and sounds are miraculously converted into electro-magnetic waves by the broadcast station for transmission through the air at the speed of light. Any television set within the radius of the station's broadcast frequency can receive the program. The same holds true for radio broadcasting.

The Federal Communications Commission

There are a limited number of radio and television broadcast frequencies which can be used without some interfering with others. The Federal Communications Commission, a government agency, was establised in 1934 to prevent such interference. Since broadcasters use the public airwaves, the FCC was also given the responsibility of making sure that stations operate in the public interest. It fulfills both functions by licensing only a limited number of broadcast stations in each area and by regulating their operation.

License Owners

As of January 1, 1980 there were 267 public and 746 commercial television stations licensed to operate in this country. Public stations are operated by community supported, nonprofit organizations while commercial stations are operated by companies in business to make a profit. Some companies own single stations; others own groups of stations.

The most important station groups are owned by three companies: the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). Each of these firms owns stations in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles (our largest cities) as well as in two other major metropolitan areas. Each station reaches about 22% of the U. S. audience. Many stations are not network-owned or network affiliates.

They are independent stations who produce their own programs and buy others from distributors.

Networks

ABC, CBS, and NBC are industry giants in another way too. Each company has a "network" division that transmits programs simultaneously to hundreds of stations (including the five it owns) via microwave, coaxial cable, and satellite links. The stations that receive these programs and broadcast them to their local audiences are called network affiliates. They have signed agreements with the network which entitle them to carry the network's programs when they want to do so.

Although network affiliates aren't obligated to carry the network's programs, they usually do. That's because the network pays its affiliates according to the amount of network time carried and the size of the affiliate's audience. The network also lets its affiliates insert some local commercials into its programs. That generates even more revenue for local stations.

Additional Network Powers

In addition to owning five important stations and distributing programs to hundreds of others, each network also produces some of its own programs. Most national news, public affairs, and sports programs transmitted by the networks are produced by them. So are the early morning and late night programs such as "Good Morning, America" and "Today."

Commercials

No discussion of commercial broadcast television would be complete without further mention of commercials themselves. Though scorned by many, commercials are often better made and more compelling than the programs in which they're placed. That's probably because much more time and money is spent on their development and production than on the same amount of program time.

Advertising agencies pay market researchers to study our needs, wants, tastes, and values. Copy writers conjure up the sounds and images sponsors hope will keep us riveted to our seats during commercial breaks. Fortunes are

spent on the productions themselves, which incorporate the most advanced film and video techniques. Additional sums are spent placing commercials in programs where potential customers are most likely to see them. All that money is either paid to or spent by advertising agencies, the companies responsible for developing commercials and other forms of advertising.

Our Role as the Audience

Many forces influence what we see on commercial television. But those of us in the viewing audience exert the greatest influence of all. If enough of us watch a particular show, sponsors bid up the price of its advertising time and it stays on the air. If not enough watch, sponsors shun it and cancellation may result. Although the system is far from perfect, it does reflect the realities of the marketplace and our democratic values.

Our influence could be even greater if we realized how much power we really have. Remember, since broadcasters use the public airwaves, they must operate in the public interest. If we believe strongly that our airwaves are being misused, we can make our views known to the offending parties, and we can petition the government to redress our grievances.

Independent Production Companies

Most of the programs you see on television have been produced by independent production companies. Employing from several to several hundred people, these companies develop and produce programs in response to station and network needs. They're highly specialized. Some provide only game shows. Others specialize in situation comedies or dramatic series. A relatively small number of firms produce most of the programs we see year after year.

Who Pays for What?

Television programs are very expensive to produce. Even a simple one-camera, unrehearsed studio interview shows cost thousands of dollars. The kinds of programs shown during prime time (when the most people are watching television) cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Since television shows cost so much to make, they must be seen by large numbers of people before their producers benefit financially from them. Only in that way can enough advertising revenue be generated to cover production and distribution costs as well as the profits all concerned expect to make.

A program is likely to be seen by many people if it's broadcast on a frequently watched channel in a major metropolitan area during prime time. Naturally many more people will see it and more commercial time can be sold if it's broadcast all around the country. Repeat showings (reruns) further enlarge the audience and fatten the pot.

In order to squeeze the maximum financial benefits from their programs, producers hardly ever sell them outright. Instead they sell broadcast rights. They license broadcasters to show their programs a certain number of times over a specified period in a particular market. At the end of that period she may resell those broadcast rights to another customer in the same area. To put it simply, producers rent their programs to broadcasters as many times as they can.

Interpreting the Ratings

The table on the following page is similar to a page from an A. C. Nielsen audience measurement report. It indicates which programs are being offered Tuesday nights from 7:30-8:00 p.m. by hypothetical television stations in one of the nation's largest broadcast markets. More importantly, it provides information regarding the audience's viewing preferences during this period. Since this activity focuses on the QRS network, let's take a closer look at the information for one of its stations, KNET.

RATING CHART

MONDAY 7:30-8:00 p.m.

STATION	TYPE OF PROGRAM	RATINGS (% of TV Households)	SHARE (% of viewing audience)	AUDIENCE IN THOUSANDS WOMEN (18+)	MEN (18+)	CHILDREN (2-11)	TEEN (12-17)
KAAA (Network)	MOVIES-variety of feature films	9	14	249	245	61	56
KPUB (Public TV)	NEWS and PUBLIC AFFAIRS ANALYSIS	1	2	33	28	0	0
KBBB	POLICE DETECTIVE ADVENTURE	6	9	188	153	58	40
KCCC	TALK SHOW-people and events	11	17	393	285	44	53
KSPA	SPANISH LANGUAGE DRAMA	4	5	153	125	105	46
KNET (QRS Network)	VARIETY SHOW music and dance	4	6	187	105	29	7
KDDD (Network)	SITUATION COMEDY father raises three children alone	14	20	408	359	343	112
KEEE	GAME SHOW	10	14	284	211	147	143
KFFF	SITUATION COMEDY (Off-network reruns) high school teacher	9	13	283	182	97	73
TOTALS		68%	100%	2,178	1,693	884	530

INTERPRETING THE RATINGS

First we learn that KNET is broadcasting a variety show in this time slot. The "rating" figure in the next column tells us that 4% of all TV households were tuned to KNET each Monday night at 7:30 p.m. during the survey period. The "share" figure in the next column means that 6% af all the households actually watching TV at this time were tuned to KNET.

The next series of numbers, when multiplied by one thousand, tells us how many women, men, children, and teens were watching the shows. As you can see, it drew approximately 187,000 women but only 7,000 teens and 29,000 children. It is not a very popular show.

Now take a few minutes to compare KNET's program offering and rating with those of its competitors.

* Of those actually watching TV at 8 p.m., what programs attract the most viewers?
* What programs are most popular with:
  - Women?
  - Men?
  - Children?
  - Teens?
* What percentage of TV households were not watching television at this time?

READING REVIEW

1. Why do broadcasters need to attract as large an audience as possible if they want to stay in business?
2. How are television ratings determined?
3. What federal agency grants licenses to broadcasters to use the public airwaves? Why are licenses limited in number?
4. What are television networks? What powers do networks have?
5. What is the difference between commercial television and public television?
6. What do advertising agencies pay market researchers to do?
7. What is an independent production company?
8. What power do television viewers have in influencing what is shown on TV?

THE QRS PROGRAMMING DECISION
A 5-DAY SIMULATION GAME

A hypothetical TV network, QRS, is looking for a replacement for their unsuccessful variety show at 7:30 p.m. In addition to the network management, there are many others who have a concern and an interest in this decision: advertisers, independent producers, and special interest groups.

Your class will be divided into ten (10) groups to simulate the actual people who would be involved in this type of prime time programming decision.

MONDAY NIGHT VIEWING AUDIENCE
7:30-8:00 p.m.

QRS TELEVISION NETWORK

ADVERTISERS	INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS	PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS
Gookies Marshmallow Cookies	Children's Programs	Environmentalists
	Game Shows	Minority Groups
Designer Jeans	Informational Programs	Children's Advocates
Dishwashing Detergent		